

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
HONOLULU, HAWAII

Memorandum

TO : R. Wass, Refuge Manager (Remote Islands)

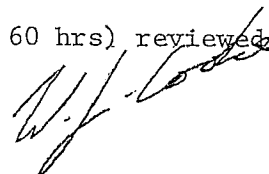
DATE: 27 SEPT 85

FROM : W. J. Cooke, Refuge Biologist, Johnston Atoll NWR

SUBJECT: September 1985 Refuge Monthly Highlights

The following highlights from the month of September for the Johnston Atoll NWR are submitted for inclusion in the monthly activities report.

- 1) Tagged and relocated one (1) Red-tailed Tropicbird young of the year to new nest. as Relocation required by grading being performed at AME field in conjunction with Plutonium cleanup efforts. Monitored success of transplanted bird till its departure. This represents the first monitoring and mitigation effort required to human activity (construction) on Johnston Island.
- 2) Discovered one (1) White-tailed Tropicbird nesting under an Ironwood tree (*Casaurina*) near the west end of the runway opposite the dump. This discovery was initiated by information supplied by several H & N employees familiar with the island and the birds. They also related that in the same area nesting and hatching had occurred last year but the chick died after being abandoned. This represents the first record of the species nesting on Johnston, in contrast to its normal nesting habitat of the cliffs of the main Hawaiian islands.
- 3) Initiated briefings on Johnston NWR and its wildlife including a plane debark briefing and a longer, illustrated briefing given to all permanent stationed personnel in conjunction with the Commanding Officer's Newcomer's Briefing. This represents the beginning of the IR and EE program at Johnston.
- 4) Continued to assist the NMFS party in their survey of the turtles of Johnston, including assisting in netting, handling, and dive surveys. Although no sleeping turtles were discovered in our dives, personnel from the USO show "Queens" discovered one turtle sleeping on the reef opposite the main dock and photographed it. Although turtles concentrate on the south shore of Johnston Island for feeding, they clearly use other areas of the lagoon for sleeping as this sighting demonstrated.
- 5) Met with Mr. R. Kuehner of the Portland Regional Office to review educational programs and material. Mr. Kuehner toured all the islands of the refuge and evaluated the need for signs and interpretative displays at various sites. Mr. Kuehner also met with the Commanding Officer and reviewed the proposed projects, receiving the CO's enthusiastic support as well as suggestions for increased visibility and effectiveness for the projects.
- 6) Completed First Draft of JA Brochure (approximately 60 hrs) reviewed with R. Kuehner



Sept. 10-11. Flight to Tern Island. Phil Bruner, Larry Hoover and Dick Wass went up. The same three plus Julie Eliason, Joan Suther and Marc Webber flew back. Bruner briefed the staff on his golden plover research and requested their assistance with banding studies and population monitoring. Hoover performed maintenance on the reefers and instructed Martin and Vetter in refrigeration maintenance and repair. Wass inspected the new dock and fuel pipeline and discussed problems and refueling plans.

Sept. 13. Fefer, McDermond and Wass met with Commander Brandes, Chief, Aids to Navigation and Lt. Commander Buckingham, Captain of the buoy tender SASSAFRAS, of the U.S. Coast Guard to discuss support of Tern Island and field trip activities. The dates of October 3-4 were set for delivery of 10,000 gal of diesel fuel to Tern Island and October 6-13 for landing a field party and drift fence at Laysan Island to prevent drifting sand from further encroaching on the lagoon. Considerable time was spent coordinating this trip during the remainder of the month. The assistance of the U.S. Army was also secured with the provision of three 500 gal fuel bladders and associated pumps and hoses and the services of a fueling specialist to assist with the transfer of fuel from the SASSAFRAS to Tern Island by small boat.

Sept. 16. Wass presented a slide talk on the Hawaiian Islands NWR to the Hawaii chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Sept. 17. Discussions were held with Richard Keuhner of the RO relative to educational plans and materials for Johnston Atoll NWR. Keuhner traveled to JA Sept. 19-21 to meet with the Base Commander and Biologist Bill Cooke for discussions and orientation.

Sept. 20. An all-day meeting was held at the National Marine Fisheries Service Laboratory to review research conducted in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands during 1985 by the FWS, NMFS, the State of Hawaii, the University of Hawaii, The Bishop Museum and Scripps Institute of Oceanography. Plans for 1986 research were also outlined.

Sept. 23 - Oct. 10. Bill Cooke was in the Honolulu Office to review accomplishments and progress and to discuss plans for 1986.

Sept. 27. Bids for the Tern Island boat hoist were reviewed and a recommendation was made to the RO that the contract be awarded to Pacific Basin Maritime, Inc.

Because September is the last month of the fiscal year, considerable time was spent determining spending priorities and purchasing equipment and supplies.

Tern Island Activity Summary

The following jobs were completed in September:

- The entire generator building was repainted.

- Several dozen old 55 gal drums were flattened and used to patch badly eroded sections of the seawall.

- Two 1,000-pound anchors were set as stern moorings for fuel and supply delivery vessels.

- Six floats were placed as channel markers.

- Leaks in the Barracks roof were patched.